

" Man ought to imitate God both in working and also in resting, since God Himself wished to present His own creative activity under the form of work and rest." Pope John Paul II Laborem Exercens 25.

I. First philosophers to consider the meaning of work:

A. Hesiod c. 750 BC

1. Prometheus stole the fire from the gods to have power for humans. level of myth Theogony
2. Philosophical fragments : level of insight
  - " If your heart within you yearns for riches, do as I tell you; work unceasingly."
  - " If you add little to little and do it often, soon the little will grow and become big."

B. Democritus 460-370 BC

1. Wrote Works and Days stressing hard work
  - " The good things of life are produced by learning with hard work; the bad are reaped of their own accord, without hard work"
  - " Hard work that is undertaken willingly is easier to bear than that which is done unwillingly."

II. Second stage of philosophical reflection on work: development of a systematic analysis

A. Plato 428-355 BC The Republic

1. utopian vision
2. division of labor: one man for one task

Socrates: " What of this, then? Shall each of these contribute his work for the common use of all? I mean, shall the farmer, who is one, provide food for four and spend fourfold time and toil on the production of food and share it with the others, or shall he take no thought for them and provide a fourth portion of the food for himself alone in a quarter of the time and employ the other three-quarters, the one in the provision of a house, the other of a garment, the other of shoes, and not have the bother of associating with other people, but , himself for himself, and mind his own affairs?

Adimantus: " But Socrates, perhaps the former way is easier.

Socrates: " It would not, by Zeus, be at all strange, for ~~now~~ that you have mentioned it, it occurs to me myself, that, ~~too~~ begin with, our several natures are not all alike but different. One man is naturally fitted for one task, and another for another. Don't you think so?

Adimantus: " I do." Republic 370a

- working  
d64
3. divides into farmer, sailor, blacksmith, cobbler, ~~weaver~~.
  4. then to establish city divides further into shopkeeper, transporter, wage earner ( laborer)
  5. then divides into soldiers
  6. finally into philosophers

7. makes no differences between women and men

Soc. "If it appears that they differ only in just this respect that the female bears and the male begets, we shall say that no proof has yet been produced that the woman differs from the man for our purposes, but we shall continue to think that our guardians and their wives ought to follow the same pursuits" 454 e

8. Justice then involves the practice of one kind of work by each person:

Soc: "To do one's own business and not to be a busybody is justice."  
9. created what we would call an elitist society with the philosopher-guardians as the leisure class with foundation the work of the workers and the protection of the soldiers.

- a. abolishment of private party
- b. communal rearing of children

B. Xenophon (450-355 BC) Oeconomicus (On Household Management)

- 1. Describe and justify society as it presently existed
- 2. Separate sphere of work for women and men (property owners and slaves)

Isomachos: "Since, then, work and diligence are needed both for the indoor and the outdoor things, it seems to me, that the god directly prepared the woman's nature for indoor works and indoor concerns. For he equipped the man, in body and in soul, with a greater capacity to endure cold and heat, journeys and expeditions, and so has ordered him to the outdoor works."

This is the first articulation of the private-public distinction for separate spheres of work.

It becomes rigidly enforced:

Isomachos: "When someone acts in a way contrary to what the god brought forth, perhaps in causing some disorder he is noticed by the gods and pays the penalty for neglecting his own works for doing the woman's works."

C. Aristotle 384-377 BC

1. Continued the same theme, but developed an even deeper analysis:

"With the human race division of labour begins at the outset, and man and woman have different functions; thus they supply each other's wants, putting their special capacities into the common stock."

2. He believed in a natural division of society with male property owners at the top; they were the only citizens, and their proper work was politics or running the "civis."

- a. male laborers, male slaves, women, and children were outside the 'civis' proper, their work was simply the material foundation for the meaningful work of the "civis."
- b. He developed this analysis through an analogy with the mind: slaves had no rational mind, children had a rational mind only potentially, women had a rational mind, but it was without authority over their irrational mind, and men, who developed practical wisdom had the full use of their minds.

c. His philosophy of the different mental capacities was subsequently derived from a philosophy of the body and the



theory of the generation of animals.

d. This in turn was derived from an elemental view of the differing relation of males and females to the elements heat and cold.

3. Aristotle's significance is the comprehensiveness of his philosophy of work in relation to other fields of philosophy.

### III. Early Christian Philosophy of Work

#### A. St. Augustine (354-430)

##### 1. introduction of a transcendent God

- a. origin of Two Cities: Work for God -grace  
Work for Man sin - nature

"What we see, then, is that two societies have issued from two kinds of love. Wordly society has flowered from a selfish love which dared to despise even God, whereas the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self. In a word, this latter relies on the Lord, whereas the other boasts that it can get along by itself." Book IV Chapt 28  
The City of God

##### 2. Introduction of the will and choice

- a. slavery a result of sin
- b. ought to choose to work wholly to build up the kingdom of God (only meaningful work.).
- c. choose grace over nature

#### B. St. Thomas (1224-1274)

- a. more integrated approach to the person

grace builds on nature  
"Virtue is natural to a man according to his individual nature, in that by bodily disposition some are disposed either well or poorly to certain virtues...But their completion is not present naturally, since in nature there is a determinism to one course of action, whereas the completion of these virtues does not depend on one mode of action, but varies according to the different fields in which virtues operate and a variety of circumstances

It is therefore evident that the virtues are in us by nature as aptitudes and beginnings but not as perfections."  
Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 63.

- b. emphasis on virtue rather than work or labor

"Virtue is an ordered disposition of soul, inasmuch as, namely, the powers of the soul are in some way ordered to one another, and to what is outside."

The goal of life is to achieve, by practice, this ordered life in relation to self and to others.

### IV: The effect of the industrial revolution.

#### 1. The above analysis based on agrarian model

- a. monastic village
- b. family
  - 1. husband outdoors gathering, hunting,
  - 2. wife indoors preparing food clothes
  - 3. bartering with neighbors.

#### 2. Industrial revolution moved men off the farm

- a. husband sells his labor for money
- b. gives money to wife who then becomes consumer
- c. this is the introduction of a money economy into the heart of community life.



3. Karl Marx's Analysis : 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts

- a. level of analysis: one of the first to examine the meaning of work in an industrial society
- b. four kinds of alienation

1. alienation of labor

" What constitutes the alienation of labour? First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not part of his nature and that, consequently, he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased." p. 124-5

2. alienation of worker from the self

" The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labor. It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided like the plague...

" We arrive at the result that the man ( the worker) feels himself to be freely active only in his animal functions--eating, drinking and procreating---while in his human functions he is reduced to an animal. The animal becomes human and the human becomes animal." p. 125

3. alienation from product

" What is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his own. The greater this product is, therefore, the more he is diminished. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force." p. 123

4. alienation from the species, from other men

" A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labour, from his life activity and from his species-life, is that man is alienated from other men.. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labour and to the objects of their labour."

c. consequences of Marx's analysis:

- 1. abolition of private property
- 2. abolition of class society
- 3. violent revolution or class warfare to achieve goal of a new society...exploitation of polarities

4. Pope John Paul II Encyclical Laborem Exercens On Human Work

- a. arrives in the above context
- b. seeks to gather what is good in capitalism and Marxism and to cut out what is bad...a third way to diffuse the polarities
- c. Gregory Baum converted back to the Holy Father by it. pto.



" We shall see that while the encyclical remains in continuity with the Church's social teaching, it introduces new ideas, derived from a critical and creative dialogue with Marxism, which allows the author to reread the Catholic tradition in a new light and raise the Church's social message to an unprecedented height."

The Priority of Labor p. 3

d. Introduce Roger Dunkin to describe the philosophical foundations of the Encyclical.

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